

Ephesians Ch 1 vs1-2

(Introduction/overview to Ephesians)

The 1st thing that we should do as we enter the book of Eph is recognize and acknowledge who it is that wrote this book. and We have to do that with scripture a little bit different then we would any other type of book because the authorship of scripture is 2-fold. There's always the instrumental author and the actual author, now in this case the instrumental author is Paul, as we see in the 1st vs (read 1st 1/2) but in reality we need to realize that God Himself is the author of this epistle, that being the Holy Spirit through Paul who is actually penning this letter to us as believers.

We read in 2 Tim 3:16-17 That, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* and Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:20-21 that *“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* and So we need to view this epistle as well as the entire bible as what it is, God's word to you and to me and if God's got something to say to us we would do well to listen and apply it to our lives.

A lot of people want to hear some huge booming voice of God that tells them what to do, “God, what is Your word for my life?” But believe me when I tell you that God has already given you His word for your life, it's called the bible. God's already said all that He has to say to us, He's given us all things that pertain to life and godliness in this book.

Now I'm not saying that the Holy Spirit won't minister direction to your heart, but what I am saying is that it won't deviate from what's already revealed in His word. Or maybe I should say it will be consistent with His word, I believe that God is telling me to witness to that fellow, well Jesus said to *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,”* so you're probably hearing right, that's consistent with His word, you see? But back to Ephesians, Paul is the instrumental author, and the Holy Spirit is the actual author.

Now as far as Paul's relationship to the Ephesians goes you can do a little bit of research in the book of Acts, we find his 1st encounter with the people of Ephesus recorded in Acts ch 18 vs 19-23. Then in ch 19 you find that he's returned to Ephesus and the Lord begins to work a powerful ministry through Paul to those in the region of Ephesus, he finds some guys that had been baptized into J.B.'s baptism but they hadn't yet heard the gospel or received the Holy Spirit. and So having shared the gospel with them they received Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit came upon them and a work was born.

Paul reasoned in the synagogue there for about 3 months and when they would no longer listen to him having become hardened to the message he withdrew from there and took the disciples with him and he then began reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus and that went on for another 2 yrs.

So Paul had a vested interest in this area having spent a considerable portion of his time in dedication to these people in planting a work, discipling the people, and seeing elders raised up to continue the work when he left. and We have in Acts ch 20 a small leadership conference that Paul held with the Ephesian elders when he knew that they would never see him again and so he wanted to impart to them some last minute things, and it was a very emotional moment as they all fell on his neck and wept and kissed him knowing that they would see his face no more.

So that would be a little bit of history concerning Paul's relationship to the Ephesians and as far as his writing this letter is concerned we know that he wrote this epistle right about 62 A.D. and it was written while he was in prison and so we read phrases in this epistle like, "*For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles.*" Eph 3:1 and Eph 4:1 "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.*" We also read where Paul petitions them to pray for him, "*that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*" Eph 6:19-20

The books of Colossians, Philemon and Philippians were also letters that Paul wrote while he was in prison and bear that in mind as we go through this letter, because the purpose of this letter is really primarily 2-fold. #1 It's a declaration of heavenly riches and exalted position that is ours in Christ, and so when we're reading through these vs and examining this letter and you begin to be blown away by the things that Paul is letting you know that are yours in Christ, (which meant they were his as well) he's sharing these things with us from a physically imprisoned position.

Then 2^{ndly} the other primary emphasis of this book is an exhortation to the godly life that should be lived and can be lived as we draw upon such vast and unlimited spiritual resources. So the book is divided into 2 halves the 1st of which is ch 1-3 and it's in those ch that Paul speaks about concerning the exalted position that we have in Christ and the vast or really unlimited resources that are ours in Him.

Then the 2nd half is chapters 4-6 and it's in those ch that Paul deals with us concerning the godly life that we should be and have no excuse but to be living in light of all of the resources that we have in Christ equipping us to do so. In short you might say that ch 1-3 are doctrinal, ch 4-6 are practical, Ch's 1-3 are this is what you have, Ch's 4-6 is this is how it plays out practically in our lives. I can't remember who it was that said "Some people are so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good." But that's true, and Ephesians gives us the balance, in Ch's 1-3 the Holy Spirit is seeking to show us rich we are in Christ. How we have everything we need and then some to lead and live a successful Christian experience, and Ch's 4-6 is how that's utilized and applied to our lives.

It's amazing to me how many people live like spiritual beggars, when we have such vast resources in Christ, they're bankrupt of joy, they're bankrupt peace and so many things that are abundant in Christ and they lead miserable Christian lives instead of just drawing upon that which is theirs already. Pardon me while I use a material example but if I had billions of dollars in the bank, and 30 million would get you through life with more than plenty to spare and so I wrote you that check, it wouldn't profit you a penny unless you believed it, acted upon it and cashed it. If you didn't cash and you walked around dirt poor ultimately dying in some abandoned warehouse someday, how tragic that would be, considering the whole time you held a check in your pocket that could've been redeemed for 30 million.

Several years ago the Los Angeles Times reported the story of an elderly man and wife who were found dead in their apartment. and Autopsies revealed that both of them had died from severe malnutrition, but the unfortunate aspect of story is that investigators found a total of \$40,000 stored up in paper bags in a closet. Maybe you remember a lady by the name of Hetty Green, for years she was called Americas greatest Miser. When she died in 1916, she left an estate valued at over \$100 million, which was a lot of money for that day, not that it isn't today but much more then. But she was so miserly that she ate cold oatmeal in order to save the expense of heating the water. When her son had a sever leg injury, she took so long trying to find a free clinic to treat him that by the time he was finally treated so much infection had set in that he had to have his leg amputated.

The book of Ephesians is written to Christians that have a tendency to walk around with a \$30 million check in their pockets with no intention of cashing it. For those Christians who might be prone to treat their spiritual resources much like that miserly couple or Hetty Green treated their financial resources. Because those type of believers are in danger of suffering from severe spiritual malnutrition, simply because they don't take advantage of the unlimited resources of spiritual nourishment and riches that's right there at their disposal. The riches of His grace, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, so the 1st 3 Ch's are the foundation, the last 3 chapters are the application, the doing, responding to what's done already in Christ, those resources that we have to draw from and Lord willing we'll look at some of those things next week.

What is the basis of those rich's? Well, we find the answer to that layered all throughout this epistle, they're based upon His, grace, His peace, His will, His good pleasure, His purpose, His glory, His calling, His inheritance, His power, His love, His workmanship, His Spirit, His gifts, His sacrifice, His strength, and His armor. (MacArthur) and What's the common thread that's woven in and through all of those things, Him, it's all about Him and what we have in Him, what He has provided for us as we abide in Him. The book of Ephesians has some 10-12 of the most famous vs in scripture and 2 great prayers. Another emphasis of the book of Eph is the grace of God, God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

So we read things like, "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" And again "*to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*" "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*" "*By grace you have been saved through faith*", we read of "*the gift of the grace of God.*" Eph 4:29, "*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*" and Finally Eph 6:24, "*Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*"

So the grace of God is of major significance in the book of Ephesians as it is really throughout all of scripture, it's all about Jesus Christ and the grace of God that we can experience in Him. Paul would say of himself, that I am what I am by the grace of God. The word grace is mentioned 12 times in this short epistle as to where its antithesis law is only mentioned once. Now having just come out of Galatians we learned much about the law and it's proper place, that's one of the major emphases of that book, law vs grace and what's the balance, or is there even a balance to be had. But that's not the case with Eph, it has a completely different thrust, so as Galatians would seek to set you free, to make you aware of the fact that "*you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*" Ephesians says now let me talk to a little bit about that inheritance that you've received in Christ and how it is that you can utilize it here and now.

Some of the key words that are found in the book of Eph (some of which I'll single out, others of which if they're in regards to the same thing I'll group them together) one another, remember we spent a little bit of time in one of our studies in the book of Gal in regards to the "one another" ministries that the bible would have us to operate in. In this short letter the words "one another" appear 6 times, the word walk- 7x, peace- 7x, glory- 8x, faith- 8x, flesh – 8x. The words His will or His pleasure (as it pertains to God's will) at least 8x, the word one in the sense of a unit or unity, about 9x. Saints- 9x, love -14x, Spirit –15x, the words according to 17x (meaning or as in "as stated by" or "indicated by" or "on the authority of", "in keeping w"/or "in agreement w"/or by the resources of").

We find it used in this epistle in sentences like Eph 1:5 "*according to the good pleasure of His will,*" Eph 1:7 "*according to the riches of His grace*", and again "*being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*" "*According to the working of His mighty power*", "*in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.*" and One more just to name a few, Eph 3:11 "*according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" and We'll take the time (Lord willing) to look into some of those phrases and they mean for us. A few more key words the word Gospel, and it's related words like, truth, promise, and mystery appear some 20x when added together. Add up the phrases such as in Christ, or in Him, in Whom or in the Beloved all of which are pointing to the same thing or same person, they total at least 23x.

Here's an interesting one the word all, appears 41x in the book of Ephesians, now that should make your ears perk up because any time you throw the word "all" into any category it leaves out nothing, it magnifies the intensity of any statement. and So anytime we read the word all in scripture we should pay special attention to what it's in regards to. Rom 3:10-12 has some interesting things to say about mankind, it says "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable." Or to put it another way Rom 3:23 "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" and Last time I checked the Greek that word "all" meant all, no one deserves heaven we've all missed the mark and deserve hell, but praise be to God that the Lord "*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" and

So by His love and His grace and mercy He bridged the gap between sinful man and a holy and righteous God, by becoming a man Himself in the person of Jesus Christ and laying His own life down on the altar of the cross so that His blood might be shed for the remission of our sin, (the bible saying that the atonement for the soul is in the blood) so that whosoever would believe on Him would not perish but have everlasting life. Just a few examples of how it shows up in this letter Eph 3:19 “that you may be filled with all the fullness of God,” Eph 3:20 “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” “Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.” Ch 4:15 “but, speaking the truth in love, (that we) may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” and Again Eph 6:24 “Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” and We’ve already made mention of the word Spirit, (and this is the last reference to key words I’ll make) but when you add up the words like Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus, Lord, or Lord Jesus Christ, God, Father, or Son. In the short 155 vs that combine to make this letter to the Ephesians, they’re used a staggering 96x and when you add up the references to the Holy Spirit which is some 8 or 10 times then you see the reference to the God dominating this epistle being referred to in some way or another over 100 times out of 155 vs.

And the reason that I give special attention to these words and there were others that are repeated that I didn’t mention, but there’s 2 reasons for taking the time to note these things, and 1 is because repetition adds emphasis, and so the more something is repeated the more emphasis lies behind it. and So it’s worth kind of pin pointing some of the things that are emphasized by the Holy Spirit in each letter. But 2ndly because every word of Scripture is inspired by God, that word “inspired” or “inspiration” in 2nd Tim 3:16 literally means God breathed.

and Since every word in Scripture is God breathed, when God sees fit to repeat Himself or give repetition to a word to add emphasis, it’s worth taking the time to stop and note or pay attention to. Why because God is showing His measure of importance, not that it’s not all-important, but God is showing His measure of emphasis to that particular issue with in the context of that letter or that subject being studied with in the text.

A couple of other things just real quick (before we just crack the surface of this wonderful letter) that are addressed in this book of just 6 ch, there’s insight into God’s salvation, spiritual insight into the church, what the church is and what the church is to be doing, there’s spiritual insight into ministry, into spirit filled living, spiritual revival, spiritual warfare, and plenty to say regarding relationships.

Our relationships to one another, insight into the relationship between a husband and wife, the relationships of parents and their children, and employee to employer type relationships. All of these things are packed in and dealt with in a profound manner in the book of Eph, and even yet I haven't grabbed it all, there's so much more. and How the Holy Spirit through Paul the apostle was able to approach and deal with all these things in such a full and profound way in such a short amount of space, I'll never know, because what he wrote in 155 vs we'll spend the next few months on, so the book of Eph is just rich with godly insight into so many areas of life.
and I pray that God will change our lives as a result of spending time in this letter.

Vs1-2

In this opening salutation Paul presents a dual source of his apostolic authority, a dual description of believers, and a dual source of blessing. 1st off, "*Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.*" Paul being his name after changing it from Saul, and an apostle being what he is by the grace of God. The word apostle simply means "one sent out." and So many times the question comes up are there apostles today, and the answer is yes and no, yes in the simple definition of the word, no in the biblical sense of the word. There are many people who are sent out, missionaries might be considered an apostolic type calling, a pastoral calling might in many ways be seen in an apostolic type of light. But not in the way that the bible uses the term apostle, there were certain criteria that had to be and would have to be met in order to be considered an apostle of which no one today could meet those criteria. For example the apostles were those men whom God uniquely chose to be the foundation layers of the church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

The apostles were those who would receive, teach and write the inspired word of God. There is no one today who is qualified to write what would be considered the word of God. Many people write commentaries, but that's not God's word that's their opinion and many times it's non-inspired and definitely fallible. As to where God's word is both inspired and non-fallible, there is no mistakes in it and there is no contradictions in it because it's be divinely authored by the Holy Spirit Himself. As an apostle you need to have seen the risen Lord, Paul qualified, as did all the rest of the biblical apostles, I don't, nor does anyone else on the face of this earth. So Paul writes who it is and what he is so that this letter might be received for what it is, the word of God. and He presents a dual source of authority by which he is able to say what he says, he's an apostle of Jesus Christ and it's by the will of God.

His credentials weren't academic, he didn't say Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrews of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the 8th day and taught at the feet of Gamaliel. Though he could've because all of that was true, but he didn't come to them with the ordination of man, or the approval of man, as a matter of fact he said concerning all of his accomplishments in the flesh that he counted them as dung so that he might gain Christ. and So Paul an apostle of *Jesus Christ* by the will of God. He was coming to them by the dual yet totally unified authority of God the Father and God the Son, and though it's not stated we could easily implicate the Holy Spirit because it's in the power of the Holy Spirit that he lived His life, with the authority of the Father and the Son.

What made him an apostle able to teach and write and instruct people in godliness? The will of God, it definitely wasn't the will of Paul, the will of Paul was to kill Christians as we read in the early part of the book of Acts, Paul knew who he was apart from God's grace and God's will for his life. Paul wrote in 1st Tim, *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man."* and Again, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."* Paul's will was to excel in Judaism and make a name for himself, but God had other plans for his life, Gal 1:15-16 *"when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles."*

Paul was an apostle by the will of God, and by the way if you've given your heart to Jesus Christ you are what you are by the will of God. Put your name and occupation in there Jane Doe a house wife by the will of God, or John Doe a carpenter or surgeon or whatever by the will of God. If your seeking God with all your heart don't question what He has you doing, there is no higher calling for your life, now if God has plans to move you on into other areas of service that's fine, but they aren't more holy or higher.

People have a tendency to see the pastorate as the highest calling of God, or the high calling of God, more elevated or spiritual, it's not. It's just a calling, it's not a higher calling, the eye can't say to the foot I have no need of you, and it doesn't matter what your occupation is we're all to be full time ministers. This is just one aspect of body life, but don't belittle one aspect of life and elevate another if you're submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ then your walking in the high calling of God for your life until He moves you on, it's not any more or less important then any other things. People often equate spiritual issues as they would material or physical ones and you can't do that, they can't be measured the same.(Continue, to the saints..)

Now, some of the early manuscripts didn't have Ephesus in their and so there is some debate as to whether or not this is written directly to Ephesus or was a circulatory letter, to me it doesn't matter much the message is still the same. Just take out Ephesus and place in their Calvary Chapel of Joplin. (read that way) This is the dual description of believers. Saints aren't people who lived a long time ago who had a statue built on their behalf. It's who you and I am in Christ Jesus, it means "holy ones" and finds its roots in the word sanctify which means set apart. Again not by works of righteousness that we've done but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ that's been imputed to us by faith. Someone has said, no man is a believer who is not also a saint: and on the other hand, no man is a saint who is not a believer. and Also to the faithful, the committed, those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ, they're one and the same, saints and faithful, that's who you are in Christ.

Vs2

What is grace? God's unmerited favor, you've done nothing to deserve, He just pours it out, and it's always grace and peace in that order because you can never experience the peace of God until you've experience the grace of God. One commentator said, Grace is the fountain of which peace is the stream. Because we have grace *from* God we have peace with God and the peace of God. and That word peace according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon speaks of "*the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is.*"

Grace and peace, a dual blessing bestowed up you this morning and again the dual source of that blessing, God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ , not distinct and separate sources but 2 manifestations of the same source we're seeing compound unity here. That being indicated by the connective word that's been translated "and" indicating equivalence, so what's being acknowledged is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is deity equal to and one and the same with God our Father, and what a great way to start off this study in the book of Eph, with a blessing of Grace and peace, the Holy Spirit through Paul wanting us to know and understand and experience fully all the blessing that's granted to us by our heavenly Father, in His Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.